

A Darker Reflection

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Summary: Three days into the Fellowship's journey, Boromir is suspicious of elven abilities and confronts Legolas. If it is not magic, Boromir is not quite certain what power the elf has over them, and he is not sure he wants to know. / A character sketch, or two. / One-shot.

A Darker Reflection

****Author's note:**** _This has been marinating, unattended, for weeks. I have too many WIPs and am editing and "clearing out" that folder on my computer. This is some of the brainstorming for what I hope will eventually become a separate multi-chap story (with an actual plotâ€"gasp!) called __Sons of Kings, or Something Like Them__, featuring primarily Legolas, Boromir, and Faramir. This is in the same 'universe' as "Chapter 5: Threats" in __My Roots are Grown__, as well as __Washing on the River__. _

Have I fallen in love with Boromir as a character/archetype and with his role in LotR as a doomed hero, a metaphorical son of Feanor, one might argue? Quite possibly.

****Disclaimer:**** Do not own.

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><p>A Darker Reflection

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><p>December 28 â€" Third Age of the Sun, 3018
On the road to Hollin**

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><p>It was the third day of their travel, and not all the companions

were yet comfortable with one another.<p>

Legolas sat leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, sharpening his knife. He watched the horizon behind Gimli—who was across from him and cursing at their kindling—and he sat close enough to Boromir on the ground that the man's cloak draped across his thigh.

Legolas glanced at Gimli and the cloak fell to the earth between them as Boromir shifted.

"Did you do that?" Boromir asked Legolas suddenly, as the flames under Gimli's hands came to life and he leaned forward to puff gently at the fire.

Legolas whetted his knife without any real attention to it and stared at the newly caught fire that grew under Gimli's ministrations. He looked up at Boromir, questioningly.

"Did I do what?"

"Did you start the fire?" Boromir asked.

"I did not start the fire. I am sitting right beside you. Obviously Gimli has started the fire."

"But he tried for a long time and could not do it, and then you looked at the logs, and the fire started."

"Yes," Legolas said, his tone questioning; he dropped his whetting stone to the ground and slipped his knife back into his belt.

"So you started the fire?" Boromir repeated.

"Boromir, Gimli clearly started the fire."

Legolas was thoroughly confused. True, he had not spent much time among men, but he had spent enough to know that Boromir's line of questioning was peculiar, at best.

Boromir still stared as the elf brushed the creases from his trousers, and Legolas felt himself frown as he watched the quivering, V-shaped crease between the man's eyebrows. Boromir was not a stupid man—he certainly knew various methods for effectively starting a fire, and igniting one from several feet away while one's hands whetted a knife was not one of them—

So, Legolas thought, _what in all Middle-earth is he talking about?_

Legolas blinked, and finally spoke aloud, slowly: "I cannot start a fire without using my hands to strike flint—"

Boromir narrowed his eyes as if he did not quite believe him. Then the man's suspicion suddenly made sense to Legolas, and he laughed, incredulous.

"Wait, Boromir! Are you asking me if I used _enchantment_ to cause the kindling to light?"

"Should I be?" Boromir asked, lifting his chin slightly. "It is said elves can do magic."

"Oh, no!" Legolas exclaimed, and he laughed again, but tried to stop himself so the man would not think he laughed at him. "Perhaps some elves can do that," Legolas clarified, "but this one cannot, and I do not believe any elf can truly conjure."

"But you must have some magic. Do not deny it!" Boromir challenged. "I have seen you speak to the trees!"

"Oh, well, yes," said Legolas, waving a hand and pursing his lips as he noted Boromir's defensive expression, "listening to the song of the world and drawing strength from the earth is not anything mystical. Even hurrying the elements along is encouragement, not magic. I do not have magic."

Boromir turned his body fully to face the elf and narrowed his eyes, demanding.

"Do you lie to me, Legolas?"

Legolas laughed.

"What cause do I have for that? You are in my company, and I yours!"

The elf reached out to Boromir and patted his shoulder. He thought for a moment of ruffling the man's hair—"as he often did in jest to the younger scouts in Mirkwood"—but he quickly thought better of it and dropped his hand back into his lap.

"Well, if you truly think Gimli not skilled enough to start a fire," Legolas cocked his head to the side and his eyes sparkled as he continued, "then look perhaps to Gandalf. He could have started the fire from all the way over there, I think."

Legolas gestured to the wizard, who was bent over a ratty map with Aragorn and Gimli, several yards away from him and Boromir.

Boromir looked startled, but then grinned sheepishly.

"You jest."

Legolas grinned back and nodded.

"I do. In this case, Gimli obviously started our fire. But do not doubt Gandalf's abilities, man of Gondor, for he is truly uncanny."

Boromir chuckled softly to himself and looked away from the elf to again consider the fire; he absently ran a hand down his jaw and scratched at the dimple in his chin.

An elf calling a wizard uncanny! _

Legolas looked sidelong at Boromir and smiled slyly, as if he knew exactly what the man was thinking.

Boromir stood and quickly left for the makeshift hearth, intending to

assist Sam in spearing Aragorn's rabbitsâ€”Legolas often made him feel distinctly uncomfortable and, if he were completely honest, disarmed, even naked.

Legolas lay back on the ground and tossed his whetting stone into the air, chanting a poem under his breath as he rhythmically caught it. Pippin walked over and sat at the elf's head, and Legolas spoke up, quickly constructing a song for him to pass the time. It was about walking very far and the trials of sore feet, and soon all the hobbits but Sam were gathered round his head like a living wreath.

Gandalf looked up from where he took counsel with Aragorn and huffed quietly, and, following the wizard's gaze, Aragorn laughed. Gimli raised his eyebrows and quickly looked back down; he busily flattened the map.

Pippin had his hands in Legolas' hair and was braiding a lock of it as the elf sang; Merry tapped out a rhythm on his cousin's calf and, after a time, Frodo pressed a finger against Legolas' lips and cut in, starting his own verse. Legolas' eyes widened but he did not move the hobbit's hand from his face, and when Frodo eventually pulled away himself, Legolas burst into surprised laughter.

What a strange creature, Boromir thought._ Older than me but younger, certainly, than Gandalf, younger than the forests, the landâ€”old and yet not; merry, but notâ€”a merriness so merry is, I think, adaptive. It is resilience in darkness._

And that was a thing Boromir could understand.

Pippin tugged at Legolas' hair, but the elf did not flinch; he instead shifted his head obligingly so Pippin could reach more easily the back of his head, as if the hobbit's tenuous flame of tender life wereâ€”in this wildâ€”a gift. Pippin's hands knocked against Legolas' head as he hastily wove _over under over under_, and Boromir smirked to see the elf's patience finally slipâ€”

He could have sworn Legolas rolled his eyes, but when he looked again, the elf was humming, and seemingly content.

Legolas was an anchor, a foil, a conductor for his companions' emotions.

And, somehowâ€”even as Legolas obnoxiously learned and repeated, line by line, Pippin and Merry's favorite drinking song, and as Boromir roughly slit the hare from neck to navelâ€”he respected the slight elf just a little more.

Boromir frowned, annoyed with himself. Maybe he was coming to trust the peculiar wisdom of elves, or at least this one, but it had only been days, and it was too soon.

He dropped the hare's skin to the ground and looked up at the clutch of hobbits once more. Merry and Frodo had moved some distance away and talked quietly, but Legolas sat now cross-legged. Hair tucked messily behind his earsâ€”pieces caught in frizzy, thin braids, one of which hung between his eyesâ€”he played a slapping game with Pippin.

Or, Boromir thought wryly, surveying the contained chaos, _perhaps not._

Perhaps he would trust in something _besides_ Legolas' wisdom. For while the elf was allegedly a well-respected and fierce warrior of his people, he had certainly allowed the hobbit to make his hair look ridiculous.

"I have made you a ridiculous mess!" Pippin said, as if reading Boromir's mind.

Legolas shrugged.

"Oh, Pippin," he said with a soft chuckle, and there was a flicker of something darker in his light eyes; he used Pippin's distraction to beat him at their game. "Believe me, I have looked much worse than a 'ridiculous mess,' as you say. I am yet as threatening to the enemy with my hair in order as I am with it as a bird's nest."

"That is true enough, I suppose!" Pippin said, and they started their game again.

Boromir's heart caught as he imagined the sorrows the elf endured as darkness encroached on Mirkwood's shrinking lands, but then he shook himself and returned to the rabbit.

_It was like magic, but not, _Boromir thoughtâ€“Legolas' power was not wisdom or enchantment, but something else altogether.

"Legolas," he said, not looking up. "Will you find some saplings for the spit?"

Legolas glanced up from where he sat with Pippin and nodded at Boromir, though the man did not see the action. Legolas shoved Pippin gently toward Sam and Boromir and then disappeared toward a nearby thicket of holly.

The elf returned a few minutes later with several long saplings; two, trimmed Y-shaped branches; and a few sturdy sticks held tightly in his hands. Legolas wordlessly held the saplings and sticks out to Boromir, and then drove and twisted and pushed the branches into the ground on each side of the fire.

Boromir looked up to see a thin slash of red from mid-cheek to the top of the elf's lip where the holly had caught him; there was a twig in his hair. He did not look at the man before turning and slipping silently past Pippin, past Aragorn and Gimli and Gandalf, to the edge of camp where he crossed his arms and stared out into the darkening gloam.

Boromir took a sapling in hand and thrust it through the hare's limp body. He passed the stick to Sam, who rubbed salt and thyme into the meat and then stood on tiptoe to reach the Y-shape of the poles.

Boromir caught Sam's wrist before the weight of the rabbit plunged the sapling and hare into the fire. He steadied the spit and guided it to the supports.

Boromir was spearing the second rabbit when he looked up again.

Legolas had walked farther from the company now and held his bow loosely at his sideâ€”from a distance he looked like a sapling himself, and he shifted from foot to foot as if moved by the wind, swaying to something Boromir could not hear.

Boromir decided he would eventually appreciate Legolas' version of something-wisdom, his something-else, but he was not quite ready to trust him just yet. Legolas was too strange and distant and, despite their similarities, Boromir could not reach him, and he was not so sure he wanted to.

Neither Mirkwood nor Gondor had a surplus of magic with which to protect their treasure: their people. Legolas and Boromir were both resilient as individuals, as sons of kings or something like them, but their circumstances had shaped them into very different folk, more different than a distinction between cultures and races could predict: elf and man, north and south, night and day, shadow and sun, celebration and ruminationâ€”contrast.

A tune in a language Boromir did not understand swept in on the breeze and played at his hair; it swirled around the fire and past the hobbits, gusting into the night.

Boromir shuddered.

He did not want to see himself reflected in the surface of those ageless grey eyes, like a warped mirrorâ€”he did not want to see his choices reflected back at him: the way he might have been had he allowed his sorrow to do more than make him fight and chase and, however nobly, just survive.

No, he thought sadly, _sometimes it is better to be ignorant._

He did not want Legolas' wisdom.

Not yet.

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><p>Thank you for reading! I am interested in hearing both positive and critical feedback about this piece, particularly in regards to the shifting POV and characterization(s). Please consider writing a review before you navigate away!
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End
file.